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FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

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Despatch No. 329

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November 6, 1958

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Subject: Berlin Weekly Report No. 353 (October 26 - November 1)

Part One - Berlin

POLITICAL

1. Ulbricht on Status of Berlin
2. Arrest of Editorial Staff of "SOS" Magazine
3. Anonymous Attack Against Willy Brandt
4. Prominent Polish Writer Applies for United States Visa
5. Soviet Protest on Air Corridor "Violation"
6. British Truck Incident

1. Ulbricht on Status of Berlin (CONFIDENTIAL)

On October 27 in a major speech at an East Berlin SED rally purportedly held for West Berlin voters, SED First Secretary Walter Ulbricht commented at length on the position of Berlin as the capital of the GDR. Ulbricht claimed that in 1945 Berlin was not made a fifth occupation zone but remained a part of the Soviet zone even after Western troops were allowed to participate in the occupation of Berlin. The Allied Kommandatura, therefore, never had supreme authority but only administrative responsibility for the Greater Berlin area. All of Berlin was, therefore, previously Soviet zone and now GDR territory.

Ulbricht also stated that the parallel drawn by certain Western politicians, "chiefly Mr. Dulles", between the situation of West Berlin and that of Quemoy was to some extent applicable. Both territories were currently misused by the powers exercising authority over them as centers of provocation and both constitute areas illegally separated from their hinterland. Since both are "islands" they must bear the consequences of an island position. Ulbricht then said that although the occupation was devoid of any legal basis, it still exists as a fact. The Bolz-Zorin Agreement of 1955 therefore stipulated that, although the GDR enjoyed full sovereignty, Soviet Forces would "temporarily" exercise the control of the traffic of goods and personnel for the Western garrisons in Berlin. Traffic between the GDR and the West sectors of Berlin and within Berlin was not involved in any agreements, Ulbricht said. The same, according to him, applied to overflights of GDR territory in the air corridors between the Federal Republic and Berlin to the extent that such overflights did not serve the provisioning of the West Berlin garrisons.

Ulbricht's speech, which was replete with the usual diatribes against Western warmongers and emphasis on GDR efforts for peace, also contained an offer to supply certain foods (notably fresh milk and vegetables) to West Berlin and to solve the problem of border crossers. He also promised that the

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visits of West Berlin citizens to East Germany might be facilitated by the organization of group travel, possibly through the establishment of a Reichsbahn travel bureau in East and West Berlin.

While the Ulbricht statement contained essentially the contentions set forth last January by the Soviet zone legal expert Kroeger, and while parts of the Kroeger argument were used since then, this was the first time that the argument has been presented in full and from the highest East German source. The only new element in Ulbricht's remarks was the contention that the traffic between the GDR and the West sectors of Berlin and within Berlin was not involved in any agreements.

While some West Berlin papers bannered the Ulbricht statement as a threat to the Four Power status of Berlin others, notably independent Tagesspiegel, were obviously intent on playing down the issue. This was also the opinion of Mayor Brandt and other leading Berlin figures who, while rebutting Ulbricht's contentions, publicly took the attitude that not too much attention should be paid to them.

Privately, these officials were concerned about the statement saying that it might cause a certain amount of uneasiness in the pre-election period, but they were not inclined to consider it as a threat to Berlin. The Eastern offer to normalize conditions within the city was dismissed as election propaganda, and Mayor Brandt was quick to unearth his ten questions to the East Berlin Magistrate of last June in which he had attempted to elicit an East Berlin reply on how to solve precisely such problems as border crossers and travel, which were now raised by Ulbricht, without receiving any reply. However, Brandt promised that any Eastern offer would be considered and be dealt with appropriately.

During the course of the week Neues Deutschland and other East papers kept the issue alive by attempting to rebut the Brandt rebuttal with a reiteration of the communist point of view.

2. Arrest of Editorial Staff of "SOS" Magazine (CONFIDENTIAL)

On October 31 the Editor-in-Chief and five members of the staff of the fortnightly West Berlin periodical "SOS" were arrested on charges of espionage. The accused were alleged to have endangered the security of the Federal Republic and its constitutional order by supporting through their newspaper the aims of the Communist-controlled SED and other East German organizations.

In the course of the investigation it became known that "SOS" received considerable financial support from East Berlin. The paper's average edition was 2,200 copies of which only a few hundred were actually sold while between 1,800 and 1,900 were usually returned by the news stands. From time to time "SOS", which called itself a "Periodical for Worldwide Understanding" issued special editions of 40,000 to 50,000 copies which were distributed free of charge by students and other helpers who received a surprisingly large compensation for this service.

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The Soviet Zone Press Association immediately issued a declaration supporting the arrested members of "SOS" and asking the Berlin Press Association and the German Association of Journalists in Bonn to do likewise. The East press generally attempted to whitewash "SOS" by emphasizing that it appeared under a British license and that men like Albert Schweitzer, Martin Niemöller, Dr. Walter Hagemann and Free University theologian Helmut Gollwitzer were among its contributors.

Chief editor of "SOS" was Manfred Roehling, 39 years old, previously member of the editorial staff of Neues Deutschland and also a member of the Communist "Committee for a Plebiscite". Owner of the "SOS" publishing house is 54 year old Oskar Fanselow. Of the other members of the staff Horst Esser and Paul Schulz are known Communists. Also among the arrested is one Hartmut Bunke who claims to be a Protestant theologian and is known as an ardent speaker at neutralist rallies. Bunke was formerly a member of the All-German People's Party and joined the SPD when his party merged with the socialists. The SPD is at the moment considering his expulsion. Among activities frequently organized by "SOS" were gatherings in which members and speakers of the crypto-Communist Berlin Peace Council, the National Front, and the German-Soviet Friendship Society participated.

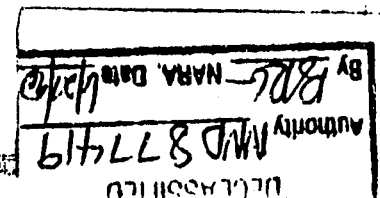
3. Anonymous Attack Against Willy Brandt (CONFIDENTIAL)

A vicious, lengthy (11-pages) anonymous mimeographed article entitled "A Man Named Karl Frahm" directed against Willy Brandt (whose name formerly was Karl Frahm) has been distributed within the SPD. The article purports to give a detailed history of Willy Brandt's activities after he left Germany in 1933 and claims that he played a sinister role as a double agent serving the purposes of the German Gestapo during the Spanish Civil War, in France, and in Scandinavia, and that he was more or less directly responsible for the death or apprehension of anti-Franco elements. The article implies that when Brandt-Frahm realized that the Germans were going to lose the war, he transmitted vital information concerning the location of the German battleship Tirpitz to British intelligence which then enabled the British to deliver a crippling blow against the battleship. Having depicted Brandt as a dangerous opportunist, the article states that he is of course not a good socialist and that he is using his leading position in Berlin only for his personal build-up. These allegations are interspersed with piquant tidbits about Brandt's amorous life claiming that the second Mrs. Brandt is not the sole recipient of his attentions.

Although nothing definite is known about the authorship of the article, SPD sources close to Brandt believe that Frau Edith Krappe, a long-time friend of Franz Neumann, is its author. The nasty diatribe is being completely disregarded in SPD circles, especially since the party has been successful in closing ranks for election campaign. Nevertheless its viciousness is indicative of the type of propaganda the Neumann faction might again stoop to in order to undermine the party's confidence in Brandt.

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4. Prominent Polish Writer Applies for United States Visa (CONFIDENTIAL)

At the time when widespread publicity is being given to Soviet author Boris Pasternak, another Iron Curtain writer, recently defected Marek Hlasko, author of the best selling Polish novel "The Eighth Day of the Week", applied to the Consulate for a visa to visit the United States. Hlasko was invited to attend the 25th anniversary of the founding of the International Rescue Committee. In addition, it is hoped he could be present for the premiere of the film based on his book to be shown soon in New York and also have an opportunity to visit other cities in the United States.

Hlasko revealed in his visa application that he is now stateless but was formerly a member of the Polish Transport Workers' Union from 1949 to 1955 as well as holding membership in the Polish Authors' Union during the past two years.

5. Soviet Protest on Air Corridor "Violation" (CONFIDENTIAL)

On October 29 the representatives of the Soviet government made a written protest through the Berlin Air Safety Center claiming that a Pan American aircraft enroute from West Germany to Berlin had on October 25th dropped leaflets from the plane near the Soviet zone city of Gotha. The Soviet protest complained that throwing leaflets within the air corridors from an aircraft is a serious violation.

Although the Pan American pilot involved in this alleged offense was not immediately available he later categorically denied that anything had been thrown from the plane during the flight indicated by the Soviets. A reply to the Soviet protest was subsequently sent indicating this fact.

6. British Truck Incident (CONFIDENTIAL)

Another flare-up over Autobahn control procedures occurred recently when Soviet checkpoint guard at Marienborn insisted on climbing into a British RAF vehicle to inspect the contents. The truck was enroute from Berlin to West Germany. The British Political Adviser in Berlin protested this act by the Soviet guard but received a reply from the Soviet officials indicating that the guard had not exceeded his authority or violated instructions.

Because they were not satisfied with this reply a British official made a subsequent call at Soviet Headquarters to indicate their dissatisfaction. Although the Soviet representative on this occasion was evasive it was the impression of the British that the Marienborn guard was overzealous in his inspection and their protests may prevent such acts in the future.

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